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**USTR LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVE TO FIGHT SOFTWARE PIRACY**

Vice President Al Gore called on USTR Charlene Barshefsky to utilize a new U.S. anti-piracy software directive as a means to curb software piracy in international markets. The Vice President announced issuance of a new Presidential Executive Order directing U.S. Government agencies to maintain appropriate, effective procedures to ensure legitimate use of software and that such software is used as authorized.

Ambassador Barshefsky noted that an important purpose of the Executive Order is its value as an example to many other countries. She stated: "Piracy of computer software remains a serious problem in many countries. As part of our ongoing efforts, we are pressing these governments to take more aggressive steps to enact and enforce modern intellectual property laws. An important aspect is that other government's agencies and ministries must take steps to ensure that they are using only legitimate software and that such software is used only as authorized. This carefully developed U.S. Executive Order should be a useful tool for other governments to draw upon."

The President has directed that USTR undertake an initiative over the next 12 months to work with other governments, particularly those in need of modernizing their software management systems or where concerns have been expressed about inappropriate government use. USTR intends to work closely with US software companies in pursuing this initiative, drawing upon their expertise in this area. USTR will encourage and if necessary press other governments to ensure that procurement practices call for, and budgets provide for, acquisition and use of legal software. USTR is already working with countries on this problem and will now intensify its efforts. These efforts should lead to more sales by US software companies and more high-tech jobs.

USTR Charlene Barshefsky further stated: "Governments must clean up their own houses if they are to successfully clean up copyright piracy in their private sectors."